

The Heavenly Footman

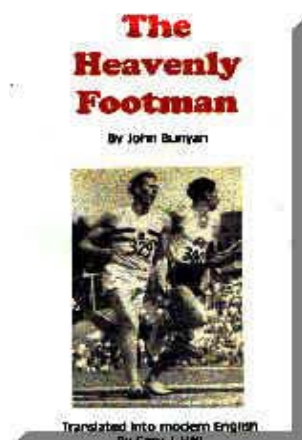
or

A Description of the man that gets to Heaven

Together with the way he runs in, the marks he goes by;
also, some directions how to run so as to obtain.

by

John Bunyan



Translated into Modern English

by

Gary J. Hall

“And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said,
Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain;
escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.”
Genesis 19:17

Translator's Preface

John Bunyan's *The Heavenly Footman* should to be read by this generation of believers. The only obstacle may be with the language that is used in the original work. It is

necessary therefore to update the language so that the modern reader can enjoy the important message that Bunyan sought to bring to the church.

This edition came after I read *The Heavenly Footman*, and desired that the members of my church read it too. The resulting work was more than a translation, for I soon found that it had to be a paraphrase too. I sought to retain as much of Bunyan's original as possible, but almost immediately I encountered phrases, words, and idioms that did not support the author's intention if simply translated word for word. In such cases an equivalent phrase, word, or idiom was found. Nevertheless, I have purposely chosen to use the same Bible (KJV) as John Bunyan.

I pray that this small book would encourage, convict, and provoke you as much as it did me.

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AN EPISTLE TO ALL THE SLOTHFUL AND CARELESS PEOPLE

Friends,

Solomon says, that, "The desire of the slothful killeth him", and if so, what will slothfulness itself do to those that allow it in their lives? (Proverbs 21:25). The proverb is, "He that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." (Proverbs 10:5). Can I be so bold to say that, no greater shame can come upon a man, than to see that he has lost his soul through foolish living, and sinned away eternal life. Yet I am certain that there is another way to do this; namely, by being slothful; slothful, I say, in the work of salvation. The vineyard of the slothful man, with regards to the things of this life, is not as full of brambles, nettles, and weeds, than that of a man who is slothful for the things of heaven. He that is slothful for heavenly things is full of heat-choking and soul-damning sin.

Slothfulness has these two evils: First, to neglect the time that should be spent in seeking God; and because of this does, in the Second place, bring him to repentance too late. I assure you, that he, who will lose his soul through slothfulness, shall have no reason to rejoice in it when he stands in hell.

Slothfulness and carelessness usually go hand in hand, and carelessness for the most part is a product of senseless living; and senseless living gives slothfulness its strength, and through it the soul is left without any means of recovery.

Slothfulness shuts out Christ; slothfulness shames the soul. "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were

moved for him.” (Songs of Solomon 5:2-4). “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.” (Proverbs 13:4).

Slothfulness is condemned by even the weakest of all creatures. “Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise.” (Proverbs 6:6). “The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold” (Proverbs 20:4); that is, he will not break up the fallow ground of his heart (Hosea 10:12), because there needs to be some effort in him that will do it; “therefore shall he beg in the harvest”. This means, when the saints of God receive the rewards of heaven, the sluggard will “have nothing,” that is, he will never be better though he cry out for mercy, just as is recorded in Matthew 25:10-12, “And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.”

If you want to know who is a sluggard in the things of God, simply compare him with a sluggard in the things of this world. This is how you may notice him: (1) The slothful person is too lazy even to begin his work; so it is with those who are slothful regarding the things of God. (2) The slothful person seeks ways to delay the work, so it is with those who are slothful regarding the things of God. (3) The sluggard will allow the slightest of personal problems to keep him from work, so it is with those who are slothful regarding the things of God. (4) The slothful person, if he does work, will only complete half the job, so it is with those who are slothful regarding the things of God. He may almost, but will fully obtain complete deliverance from hell; he may almost, but will never be a saint, unless he mends his ways. (5) The slothful usually miss the opportunity for getting things done, and so it is with those who are slothful regarding the things of God. (6) They who are slothful rarely or never produce good fruit, so it is with the soul-sluggard. (7) They that are slothful are rebuked for their laziness, so also will Christ deal with those who are not active for Him. You wicked or slothful servant, out of your own mouth will I judge you; you said I was thus and thus, why did you give my money to the bank? &c. (Luke 19:22). Take the unprofitable servant, and cast him into utter darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 25:26-30).

What shall I say? Times runs, and will you continue to be slothful? You’ve wasted so much of your life, and will you continue to be slothful? Your soul is worth a thousand worlds, so will you continue to be slothful? The day of death and judgement is at the door, so will you continue to be slothful? The curse of God hangs over your head, and will you continue to be slothful? Nevertheless, the demons are earnest, hard working, and seek all possible means every day, through every sin, to keep you out of heaven, and destroy your salvation, so will you continue to be slothful? Also, others around you are diligent for the things that perish, and will you continue to be slothful concerning the things that are eternal? Are you willing to be damned for slothfulness? Are you willing for the angels of God to fail to bring your soul to heaven when your body dies, while demons wait to drag you to hell? Was Christ slothful in the work of your redemption? Are His ministers slothful in bringing this message to you? Finally, if all this does not move you, I tell you God will not be slothful or negligent to damn you (such damnation

that is over you even now), nor will the devils fail to take you, nor hell willing to receive you.

Sluggard, are you still asleep? Are you determined to sleep the sleep of death? Will neither truth about heaven or hell awaken you? Will you continue to say, “Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,” and “a little folding of the hands to sleep”? (Proverbs 6:10). Will you continue to turn yourself in your sloth as a door is turned upon its hinges? I wish that I was skilful in lamentation, and that I had an aching heart towards you, how greatly I would pity you! How I would weep over you! O that I could, like Jeremiah, let my tears run like rivers of water for you! Poor soul, lost soul, dying soul, how hard my heart must be if I cannot mourn over you! If you lost just one limb, a child, or a friend that would not be as great as losing your soul. If it should spend a day, or a year, or ten thousand years in hell, it cannot be compared with eternity. Yes, hell is for ever! That word ‘ever’ cuts deep. How dreadful that word will be when you hear God say, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire”! (Matthew 25:41).

Objection: But if I should mend my ways, and run as you want me to, then I must run from all my friends; for none of them are running this way.

Answer: If you do this, you will run into the arms of Christ and of God, so what harm will that do you?

Objection: But if I run this way, then I must run from all my sins.

Answer: Absolutely true. If you do not, then you will run into hell-fire.

Objection: But if I run this way, then I will be hated by others, lose the love of my friends and relatives, especially those whom I rely upon, and I shall be scorned by all who know me.

Answer: And if you do not, then you are certain to lose both the love and favour of God and Christ. You will lose heaven and its glory, and be mocked of God for your folly; “I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh” (Proverbs 1:26). If you desire not to be hated and mocked, then make sure that your reckless life does not bring the displeasure and mockings of the great God upon you; for His mocks and hatred will be terrible, because they will fall upon you in terrible times, even when distress and anguish are upon you. This will happen when death and judgement come; when all your friends on earth, and all the angels in heaven, cannot help you ... “I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me” (Proverbs 1:26-28).

Objection: But surely I can wait a year or two before I do this?

Answer: (1) Do you own a lease on your life? Has God told you that you have another year or two months to live? No, well it may be that you will not even live that long anyway! (2) Would you be so foolish and unwise as to gamble your soul upon the uncertainty of life? (3) Do you know whether the day of grace will last for another week? For some people the day of grace is already past before their life is over: and if this was true with you, would you not say, How I wish I had begun to run before the day of grace ended and the gates of heaven were closed against me. (4) Suppose you saw one of your neighbours neglecting their house or property, saying that they had enough time to make repairs. Since their time on earth is certain, would you not call them fools? If this is true, do you think that you are wise to let your immortal soul hang over hell by the thread of the uncertainty of life, which may be cut short at any moment?

All such objections are the words of a slothful spirit. Wake up! Refuse to be slothful any longer! Step forward! Put your heart and your all into the way of God, and run. The crown is at the end of the race. At the finishing line stands the loving forerunner, even Jesus, who has prepared heavenly provision to make your soul welcome, and He will give it to you more willingly than you could ever desire it from Him. So do not delay the time any longer, but put into practice the words of the men of Dan to their brethren, after they had seen the goodness of the land of Canaan, “Arise, for we have seen the land, and behold it is very good; and are ye still, be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land” (Judges 18:9).

I wish our souls may meet with comfort at the journey’s end.

Farewell.

John Bunyan.

The Doctrine

“So run that ye may obtain” (1 Corinthians 9:24)

Heaven and happiness is that which every one of us desires, for even wicked Balaam said, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his” (Numbers 23:10). Yet for all this, there are so few that actually obtain that wonderful glory, for many who claim to believe fall short of the welcome of God into His pleasant place.

The apostle Paul, in his epistle, desires the salvation of the souls of the Corinthians. He encourages them to act upon his words, for in doing so they will be mightily blessed. His counsel is as follows: Firstly, do not be wicked by sitting still and hoping to reach heaven; instead run for it. Secondly, they should not congratulate themselves for simply running; instead he says, “So run, that ye may obtain”. Here he reveals that some do run because they do not want to lose their souls. They begin their run at once ... “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years

draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” (Ecclesiastes 12:1). They pace themselves in the endurance race on the way of righteousness ... “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1). Are you running like this? Some run from father, mother, friends and companions so that they may receive the crown. Do you run like this? Some run despite trials, afflictions, good report and bad report, that they may win the pearl ... “Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day” (1 Corinthians 4:13 & see 2 Corinthians 6). Do you run like this? “So run that ye may obtain”.

These words, though taken from men running to win a wager, are a very good comparison for the saints of the Lord. “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.” This means that you should not only run, but run with the determination to win. “So run, that ye may obtain.”

As I proceed to explain the text, I will show you, in some measure, what the words are referring to.

What the text teaches.

The doctrine is this: They that desire heaven must run for it. I ask you to pay close attention to this. “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run ye.” The prize is heaven, and if you would have it, you must run for it. You have another scripture that confirms this in Hebrews 12:1-3, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” Let us run, he says. Also, says Paul, “I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air” (1 Corinthians 9:6).

What the word run means.

Before I continue any further, note the following words:

Firstly, FLYING; Though this is not running in the strictest sense, it is used to describe the swiftest sort of running. This is what is meant in Hebrews 6:18 where fleeing is mentioned ... “we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” Notice “who have fled.” This is a reference to the city of refuge mentioned in Joshua 20, where a man could flee to escape he who wanted to take vengeance upon him for the crime committed. Therefore, it is a running or flying for one’s life. It is a running that takes every ounce of energy. So run!

Secondly, **PRESSING**; This running is also described as pressing. “Press toward the mark” (Philippians 3:14). This reveals that those who would have heaven must not be hindered by any difficulty that comes their way. Instead they should press, push, and force their way through all that would stand between themselves and heaven. So run!

Thirdly, **CONTINUING**; This running is described in Colossians 1:23, “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel”. It is a continuing in the way of life. It does not mean to run a little bit at a time, by fits and starts, or to run halfway and almost there. Rather it means to run for dear life, to run through all difficulties, and to run until the finishing line is reached, that is, the end of life. “So run, that ye may obtain.”

Several reasons for making this doctrine plain.

1. Not everyone who runs obtain the prize. There are many that do run, but run too far, and so miss the prize that stands at the finishing line. You know that all who run in a race do not obtain the victory. They may run well, but only one can win. So it is here. For it is not everyone that runs, or everyone that seeks, nor everyone that strives for the top position that gets it, (see Luke 13). “And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully,” declares Paul in 2 Timothy 2:5. Meaning that one should not run without God’s approval. What do you think awaits those who claim to believe and refuse to run towards heaven? This includes every lazy one, every shameless and foolish believer, who allow themselves to be distracted by anything, hindered by anything, that will never run fast toward heaven but is slower than a snail that creeps on the ground. Yes, there are some who profess salvation that do not run even as fast as a snail on a wall towards God, yet they think that they will be blessed with heaven and happiness. So notice that there are many more who run than there are who win the prize, therefore, he that desires heaven must run for it.

2. Even if a man does run, if he does not overcome, or win as well as run, what is the point of his running? He will get nothing for it. The man who runs in a race does so to win the prize; but if he does not obtain it, then he has wasted his time and energy for nothing. And ah! how many such runners will there be found on judgement day? Even multitudes, multitudes that have run, yes, run as far as the very gates of heaven, but are not able to proceed any further. They will stand outside knocking, crying, Lord, Lord, but it is too late; they will receive nothing but rebuke for their effort. Depart from me, you cannot enter here, you come too late, you run too lazily, the door is shut. “When once the master of the house is risen up,” says Christ, “and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, I will say, I know ye not, Depart ...” (Luke 13:25). How sad it will be for those that run but do not win; therefore, if you desire heaven, then you must run for it; and “so run that ye may obtain.”

3. In a symbolic sense, the way is long. There is many a muddy step, many high hills, great effort involved, a wicked heart, world and devil to overcome. By this I mean, that there are many steps ahead for those who intend to be saved (win the prize), as we run or

walk in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham. Escaping Egypt you must pass through the Red Sea; you must run a long and tedious road, through the vast howling wilderness, before you reach the promised land.

4. They who want to go to heaven must run towards it, because, as the way is long, so the time they have for reaching the finishing post is uncertain. The present is the only time that has been given to you. "Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Proverbs 27:1). Do not say, I have plenty of time to prepare myself for heaven, I warn you, the bell may toll for you before the week is out. When death comes you will have to go ready or not. Therefore prepare yourself now; do not put it off; it is not good to dawdle when the salvation or damnation of your soul is at stake. The one who has a long way to go in a short time, shorter than he realises, he must run if he is going to arrive.

5. They who desire heaven must run to it, because the devil, the law, sin, death and hell, are hard at their heels. There is not a poor soul that is going to heaven, but that the devil, the law, sin, death and hell seek his destruction. "Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8). Be certain of this fact, the devil is nimble, he can keep up with you. He is light of foot and has overtaken many. He has tripped them up and given them an everlasting fall. Beware of the law, that is able to shoot a great distance, make sure you keep out of reach of those big guns - the ten commandments. Hell also has a wide mouth. It can stretch itself further than you can ever know. As the angel said to Lot, Take heed, "look not behind thee, neither tarry thou in all the plain," that is, anywhere between earth and heaven, "lest thou be consumed" (Genesis 19:17). So I say to you, Take heed, tarry not, lest the devil, hell, death, or the fearful curses of the law of God overtake you and throw you down because of your sin, and you are able to arise no more. If this were well considered, then you, as well as myself, would say, They that desire heaven must run to it.

6. They that desire heaven must run to it, because the gates of heaven may close soon. Often sinners do not have the gates of heaven open to them as long as they think. When the gates are shut upon an individual, they cannot be opened by all the men on earth or angels in heaven. I shut "and no man openeth" said Christ (Revelation 3:7). So what would happen if you arrived fifteen minutes too late? I will tell you, you will spend eternity bewailing your misery. Francis Spira could tell you what it means to delay until the gates of mercy be firmly shut, or to run so lazily that the gates are shut in your face (see note 1). What, to be shut out! Shut out of heaven! Sinner, rather than miss heaven, run for it; yes, and "so run that thou mayest obtain."

7. If you do lose the race, you will lose all. You will lose your soul, God, Christ, heaven, happiness and peace. Besides, you open yourself up to all the shame, contempt and reproach that either God, Christ, saints, the world, sin and the devil can pour upon you. As Christ says of the foolish builder, so I will say to you, if you be the sort of person that runs but loses, that all who pass you by will mock saying, This man began to run well, but was not able to finish (see Luke 14:28-30). But more of this later.

Nine-fold word of advice on how to run.

Question: But what should a poor soul do to run? For this is the very thing that afflicts my soul, that is, to run yet fall along the way. Maybe I will fall before I reach the end. This worries me a great deal. Please tell me how I should run.

Answer: By way of comforting your soul in this issue, consider the following things.

First word of advice. If you would so run as to obtain the kingdom of heaven, then be sure that you are on the way that leads to it. For it is foolishness to think that you shall win the prize, even if you do run fast, unless you are on the road that leads to it. Imagine that there was a man, who for a wager, agreed to run from London to York. Now, though he runs very swiftly, if he is going in the opposite direction he will soon be out of breath and be further from the prize. So then, it is not simply the runner, not even a powerful runner that wins the crown unless he is on the way that leads to it. I have noticed, though I have only been a believer for a short time, that there is a great running to and fro, some go this way, and some go that way, yet I fear that most of them are running the wrong way. You see, even if they run as swift as an eagle can fly, they will never receive any benefit for it.

Here is one who runs a-quaking, another a-ranting; another one runs after Baptism, and yet another after Independency. Here is one running for freewill, and another for Presbytery; and yet it is possible that most of these groups are running completely the wrong way. He is running for his life, soul, either for heaven or hell.

If you should ask me, "Which is the right way?" I will tell you that it is Christ, the Son of Mary, the Son of God. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6). So then, this is what you need to know, if you want to be saved, is Christ your Saviour and have you received all His benefits; has He covered you with His righteousness? Has He revealed to you that your sins are washed away with His heart-blood? Are you planted in Him? Is He your whole life? Are you being conformed to His likeness? That is, do you have such faith as to believe that you are righteous, because Christ is your righteousness, and so are determined to walk with Him as the joy of your heart, because He has saved your soul? For the Lord's sake take heed, and do not deceive yourself into thinking that being almost on the road is good enough. For if you are not on the road, then you will not receive the prize; and if you miss that, then I am sure that you will lose your soul, even that soul that is worth more than the whole world.

I have enlarged upon this subject in my book of the two covenants, so I will move on; only I plead with you to take care of your soul, and you will if you receive the following advice: Do not trust in your own ability, throw it away; instead, go down on your knees in prayer to the Lord to receive the spirit of truth; search His word for direction; avoid the company of deceivers; keep the company of the soundest Christians, those that have the most experience of Christ; be careful of Quakers, Ranters, and Freewillers (see notes 2-3); also do not spend too long with some Anabaptists, though I am one myself (see note

4). I tell you that this is a very serious matter, but I fear that you will pay little attention to it, and this fact makes my heart ache while I am writing to you. May the Lord teach you the way of His Spirit, and I am sure you will know it. So run.

Before I go any further, let me ask you to consider two things:

1. Be careful about trusting on your outward obedience to any of God's commands, or thinking that you are great in God's eyes because of it. 2. Beware of trying to find peace for your soul through self-righteousness. If you believe that you are a sinner, that you are justified freely by the love of God through the redemption that is in Christ; and that God for Christ's sake has forgiven you, not because He saw anything done, or could be done, in or by you, to cause Him to do so; for that is the right way. May the Lord put you in it, and keep you in it.

Second word of advice. If you are on the way then you should spend much time studying and meditating upon the way. A man who wants to be an expert in any field must study hard, and so likewise it is with those who want to be experts in the way. This is what you must do; spend as much time studying about Christ, who is the way; what He is, what He has done, and why He is what He is, and why He has done what He has done. Study why "He took upon Him the form of a servant" and why He "was made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7). Study the reason why He cried, why He died, why He bore the sins of the world, why He was made sin, and why He was made righteousness, why He is in heaven in the nature of man, and what He is doing there. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Spend much time meditating upon and thinking about these things. Also think about those places you must avoid along the way, so that you pass them by. This is the way one travels from one place to another. He passes by a doorway on his left, a bush on his right, and avoids that which stands in his way. This is what you must do: Avoid such things which are expressly forbidden in the Word of God ... "Withdraw thy foot far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house, for her steps take hold on hell, going down to the chambers of death" (see Proverbs 5 & 7). So then, everything that is not of the way, beware of it, avoid it, do not approach it, and have nothing whatsoever to do with it. So Run.

Third word of advice. Added to this you must get rid of all those things that hang upon you, those things that are hindering you on the way to the kingdom of heaven. Such things as covetousness, pride, lust, and whatever else your heart desires as you run in this heavenly race. Men that race for a wager, if they want to win, they must not carry anything that will slow them down, anything that would be a hindrance as they run. "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things" (1 Corinthians 9:25). This means that he casts away everything that would be a disadvantage to him, or as the apostle says, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1). It is foolish to talk about going to heaven if your heart is full of those things that hinder. What, would you not say that such a man who would be in danger of losing, if he were to run in a race with his pockets full of stones, a heavy coat on his shoulders, and lumpish shoes upon his

feet? So it is here; you talk about going to heaven, and yet you fill your pockets with stones. You fill your heart with the things of this world, and you weigh yourself down with all its profits and pleasures. Alas, alas, you are greatly mistaken! If you intend to win, then you must strip yourself of all this, you must lay aside every weight, and you must be temperate (self-controlled) in all things. This is the way to run.

Forth word of advice. Beware of bypaths; take care that you do not turn into those lanes that will lead you out of the way. There are many crooked paths, paths in which men go astray, paths that lead to death and destruction, so keep away from those. "The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace." (Isaiah 59:8). Some of them are dangerous because of practice; "Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths." (Proverbs 7:25); some because of the teachings of men, but do not concern yourself with those paths; pay full attention to the path before you, look straight ahead, turn neither to the right or the left, but keep your eyes looking right on. "Her ways [the ways of wisdom] are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." (Proverbs 3:17) ... "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn neither to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil." (Proverbs 4:26-27). This counsel is rarely accepted. This is the reason why so many jump from one false teaching to another. They stagger this way and then that way. They escape from one lane simply to go into another. Because of this they miss the way to the kingdom.

Though there is only one way to heaven, yet there are many crooked lanes and bypaths that branch from it. Even though the kingdom of heaven is the biggest city, it is usually the case that the bypaths are the most travelled on. This is why people fail to find the way to heaven. Because of these lanes so few keep on the true path. Nevertheless, the harlot of Jericho is a good example to explain how we know that we are on the right way. She tied a scarlet thread to her window so that the spies would know her house (Joshua 2:18). We have the scarlet streams of Christ's blood running through the way that leads to the kingdom of heaven. Therefore look to that. Make sure you can see the blood of Christ sprinkled in the way, and if you do, rejoice, you are on the right path. Be careful though, or else you may easily find yourself on the wrong path, even if it appears to be a very pleasant one. Take note, if you do not find written with the blood of Christ down the middle of the road, that He came into the world to save sinners, and that we are justified, though we are ungodly, get out of that way. For the true way is the one which the apostle described in Hebrews 10:19-20, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."

How easy a matter it is in our day, for the devil to be too cunning for poor souls, by calling his bypaths the way to the kingdom! If false teachers should declare "This is the way to God", though it is really created by the devil, notice how quickly, greedily, and with great effort, poor souls commit themselves to it. This is especially true if it has the appearance of goodness and morality. This is the reason why so few can tell the difference between the painted bypaths and the plain way to the kingdom of heaven. They still do not know who the true Christ is. Neither do they know His righteousness

and they have no sense of their own insufficiency, but instead they are bold, proud, presumptuous and self-conceited.

Fifth word of advice. Do not spend all of your time looking at the sky as you journey heavenwards. You know that those who run in a race do not look all around them, nor do they continually look at the sky. If they did this they would soon stumble and fall. It is the same for you; if you pay attention to every teaching of men, or if you continually pry into God's secret things, or if you spend your time questions over curiosities, you will stumble and fall. This is exactly what many hundreds in England have done, both in the Ranters and Quakers, to their own eternal damnation, unless by some miracle of God's grace they should come back to the truth. Take heed therefore, do not follow the proud and boastful spirit, which is devil-like, that is not satisfied with his own position. David was of an excellent spirit when he said, "LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child." (Psalm 131:1-2). This is the way you should run also.

Sixth word of advice. Take heed that you do not pay attention to everyone that calls after you as you are on your journey. If someone should call after a man who is running in a race, saying, 'Stop, I want to talk with you,' or 'Slow down, I want to run with you', the runner would reply, 'Sorry, I cannot stop. I am in a hurry, please do not talk with me now; nor can I slow down for you, for I am running for a wager. If I win I will receive the prize, but if I lose, I will lose everything. So do not hinder me.' How wise are men when they run for corruptible things, and so should you be, for you have greater reasons to do so, since you run for incorruptible glory. I warn you about this now, because I know you will have plenty of voices calling after you, even the devil, sin, the world, bad company, pleasures, prosperity, flattery, ease, pride, and many more besides. One will cry, 'Wait for me'; another saying, 'Do not leave me behind'; yet another, 'Take me with you'. 'What,' the devil will say, 'will you go without your sins, pleasures and prosperity? Why are you so hasty? Can you not wait and take these with you? Will you leave your friends and companions behind you? Can you not do as your friends do, carry the world, sin, lust, pleasure, prosperity, flattery, along with you?' So be careful that you do not listen to the tempting, enticing, seductive and soul-destroying flatteries of such hellish words as these. "My son," says Solomon, "if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." (Proverbs 1:10).

You know what it cost the young man who was enticed by a harlot, of whom Solomon speaks in the seventh chapter of Proverbs, "With her much fair speech she" won him, and "caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him," till he went after her "as an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;" even so far, "till the dart struck through his liver, and knew it not that it was for his life. Harken unto me now therefore," he says, "O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth, let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths, for she hath cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain by her," that is, she kept them out of heaven. "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." Soul, take this advice and say, "Satan, sin, lust, pleasure, prosperity, pride, friends, companions, and everything else, leave me alone, keep away, do not come near me, for I am running for

heaven, for my soul, for God, for Christ, from hell and everlasting damnation: if I win, I win all, and if I lose, I lose all; leave me alone, for I will not listen to you.” So run.

Seventh word of advice. Do not be put off by the many discouragements that you will meet with during your journey. The man who is determined to reach heaven, if Satan cannot win him by flatteries, will try to weaken him by discouragements; saying, “You are a sinner, you have broken God’s law, you are not of the elect, you came too late, the day of grace is past, God does not love you, you are wasting your time, you are lazy,” plus countless other discouraging suggestions. And so it was with David, where he says, “I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” (Psalm 27:13-14). It is as though he said, ‘The devil did rage and my heart was full of sin, that had I judged according to my own sense and feeling, I would have been totally confused; but I trusted to Christ in the promise, and believed that God would be true to His promise, in having mercy upon me, an unworthy sinner; and this is what encouraged my heart, and kept me from fainting.’ This is exactly what you must do also when Satan, or the law, or your own conscience, tries to dishearten you, either by the greatness of your sins, the wickedness of your heart, the tediousness of the way, the loss of worldly entertainments, the hatred you will receive from the unsaved, or the like; then you must encourage yourself with the freeness of the promises, the compassion of Christ, the merits of His blood, the unconditional invitation to come in, the greatness of the sins of others who have been forgiven, and that the same God, through the same Christ, continues to offer the same free grace. If you do not meditate upon these things, then your steps will be very heavy as journey to heaven, and you may as well give up now. Therefore, I say, take heart in your journey, and say to them that seek your destruction, “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise, and when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me.” (Micah 7:8). So run.

Eighth word of advice. Take heed of being offended at the cross which you must go by before you come to heaven. You must understand, as I have previously mentioned, that there is no man that goes to heaven, but that he must go by the cross. The cross signpost by which all that go to glory must pass by. “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22). “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (2 Timothy 3:12). If you are in the way to the kingdom, you can be absolutely certain that you will come to the cross very soon - the Lord grant that you do not shrink at it, so as to turn back again. “If any man will come after me,” Christ said, “let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” (Luke 9:23). The cross stands, and has stood from the very beginning, as a signpost to the kingdom of heaven. You know if someone asked you the way to such and such a place, you, in offering good directions, not only say, “This is the way,” but add, “you must pass by a certain gate, by a fence, by a bush or tree, by a bridge”, or something similar. So it is here. Are you inquiring how to get to heaven? Well I can tell you, Christ is the way; into Him you must get, into His righteousness, to be justified; and if you are in Him, you will presently see the cross, you must go close by it, you must touch it, more than this, you must take it up, or else you will quickly go out of the way that leads to heaven, and find yourself travelling down some crooked lane that leads down to the chambers of death.

How can you recognise the cross by these six things: 1. In the doctrine of justification. 2. In the doctrine of mortification. 3. In the doctrine of perseverance. 4. In self-denial. 5. Patience. 6. Communion with poor saints.

1. In the doctrine of justification; there is a great deal of the cross in that: a man is forced to suffer the destruction of his own righteousness for the righteousness of another. This is not an easy thing for a man to do. I assure you that it will stretch every vein in his heart before he will be brought to yield to it. What, for a man to deny, reject, abhor, and throw away all his prayers, tears, alms, keeping of sabbaths, hearing, reading and more besides, in the point of justification, and to count them accursed; and to be willing, while being fully aware of his own sins, to cast himself totally upon the righteousness and obedience of another man, hating his own righteousness, counting it as deadly sin, as the clear violation of the law; I say, to do this in deed and in truth, is the biggest piece of the cross; and therefore Paul calls this very thing a suffering; for he said, "And I have suffered the loss of all things," which above all was his own righteousness, "that I might win Christ, and be found in Him, not having," but rejecting, "mine own righteousness." (Philippians 3:8-9).

2. In the doctrine of mortification is also much of the cross. Is it easy for a man to cast away his false beliefs, his vile sins, the sins he loves, those sins that are dear to him as the flesh upon his bones? To reject all that is pleasant to the eyes, and even those things which the eye has not yet seen? To put away pride, covetousness, ungodly friends, sports, pleasures, and other things besides? I tell you that it is not an easy thing to do. For if it were, what need would there be for prayers, sighs, and sleepless nights? Why would we ever think of going back if it were easy? No, do you not see, that some men, would rather lose their souls, heaven, God, Christ, and all, before they would this? What other reason is there for the delays and excuses saying, 'Stay a little longer, I am unwilling to leave my sins while I am so young and in good health'? Again, is there any other reason why others are half-hearted, cold and erratic, even though they are warned over and over; promising to get right with God, yet never actually doing so? I assure you, to cut off the right hand, or to pluck out the right eye, is of no pleasure to the flesh.

3. The doctrine of perseverance is also cross to the flesh. It is not only to begin, but also to hold out, not just lay aside the world and say, 'I am going to heaven,' but also to know Christ, to put on Christ, and to walk with Christ all the way to heaven. Indeed, it is no big deal to look for heaven, to begin to seek the Lord, or to shun sin. O but it is a very great matter to continue with God's approval! "My servant Caleb," says God, is a man of "another spirit, he hath followed me," followed me always, he has continuously followed me, "fully, he shall possess the land." (Numbers 14:24). Of the many thousands of the people of Israel in that generation, almost every one of them did not endure the journey from Egypt to the land of Canaan. Yes, they set out willingly, but were soon out of breath, for their heart turned back again to Egypt.

It is an easy matter for a man to run hard for a short time, for a furlong, for a mile or two, but to hold out for a hundred, for a thousand, even ten thousand miles! For a man to do this, he will quickly meet with the cross, pain, and tiredness of the flesh, especially if he

has to encounter thorns, swamps, and other hindrances, that will make his journey even more painful.

Do you not see with your eyes daily, that perseverance is a very great part of the cross? Why else do men soon grow weary? I could show you many people, who, after following God for a year or less, are completely out of breath. They have settled down to rest not even halfway to heaven, because of one sin or another. Some of these have said that "The way to heaven is too difficult, too long, too much holiness is expected of me, I cannot make it, I cannot go any further."

4,5,6. We will take the last three together, they are, patience, self-denial, and communion with poor saints. How hard are these things? It is an easy matter to deny another man, but it is not an easy thing to deny one's self; to deny myself out of love to God, to His gospel, to His saints, of this advantage or of that gain; no, even of that which I might lawfully do, unless I offend someone else. There is a scripture that is seldom read, and even less often put into practice, which reads, "I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, if it make my brother to offend." (1 Corinthians 8:13). Again, "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." (Romans 15:1). But how headstrong, how quick, how spiteful, and self-centred are the majority of those who claim to be believers today! Also, how little consideration of the poor, though they might say, "Be warm and well fed"! Few there be that give anything to the poor. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:10). I tell you all such things are a cross to flesh and blood. A man who is selfish, and is able to resist such a cross, is like a scared horse without a bridle, it offends him and away he runs, nothing can stop him.

It is the cross that hinders those who will not reach heaven. I am convinced, were it not for the cross, we would see many more professing faith; but the cross, that is the thing that offends them.

Some men, as I said before, when they come to the cross refuse to go any further, but instead return to their sins. Others stumble and break their necks; some, when they see the cross up ahead, turn aside to the left or the right, thinking that they will reach heaven another way; but they deceive themselves. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall," mark that word, shall be sure to "suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12). There are so few that come to the cross and cry, "Welcome, cross," as some of the martyrs did to the stake they were burned upon. Therefore when you meet with the cross on your journey, regardless what form it takes, do not be put off, do not say, 'Alas, what shall I do now!' Instead, take courage, knowing that by the cross is the way to the kingdom. Can a man believe in Christ and not be hated by the devil? Can he confess his faith in Christ and the children of Satan hold their tongues? Can darkness agree with light? Can the devil abide the one who honours Christ Jesus in faith and life, and leave him alone? Have you never read that "the dragon persecuteth the woman"? (Revelation 12), or that Christ Himself said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." (John 16:33).

Ninth word of advice. Ask God that He would do these two things for you: First, Enlighten your understanding. Second, Inflamm your will. If these two are in your life, there is no doubt but that you will go safe to heaven.

First, Enlighten your understanding. One of the great reasons why men and women pay so little regard to heaven, is because they see so little of it. And the reason why they see so little of it is because they have their understanding darkened. Paul says, do you not as believers “walk as do other Gentiles, even in the vanity of their minds, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance [foolishness] that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” (Ephesians 4:17-18). Do not walk like them, do not run with them: also, poor souls, they have their understanding darkened, their hearts blinded, and that is the reason they fail to appreciate the Lord Jesus Christ, and the salvation of their souls. For when men do come to appreciate spiritual things, the greatness of God, the greatness of Christ, and the eternal glory that will be enjoyed in heaven; also, when they see that it is possible for them to have a share in it, I tell you it will make them run through thick and thin to enjoy it. Moses, having a sight of this, because his understanding was enlightened, was not afraid of the wrath of Pharaoh, but chose “rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” He refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, considering it to be of greater value to be counted worthy to suffer for Christ, alongside the poor despised saints, and because Moses saw Him who was invisible and “had respect unto the recompence of the reward.” (Hebrews 11:24-27). This is the very thing which the apostle usually prayed for in his epistles for the saints, namely, “That they might know what is the hope of God’s calling, and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” (Ephesians 1:18), and that they might “be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.” (Ephesians 3:18-19). Pray therefore that God would enlighten your understanding, for that will be a very great help to you. It will help you endure many a hard brunt for Christ, as Paul says, “After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions. You took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.” (Hebrews 10:32-34). Imagine a very costly jewel lying on a road, if it is trampled upon, it is because it was not seen. Why, so it is here, though heaven is so precious, and you have a great need of it, yet if you do not see it, that is, have your understanding opened or enlightened to see it, you will not regard it at all. Therefore cry to the Lord for enlightening grace and say, ‘Lord, open my blind eyes: Lord, remove the veil from my darkened heart, show me the things of heaven, and let me see the sweetness, glory, and excellency of them for Christ’s sake.’”

Second, Inflamm your will. Pray that God would inflamm your will with the things of heaven. For when a man’s will is fully set upon doing such and such a thing, then it would have to be a very serious matter for him to be hindered from accomplishing it. When Paul was determined to go up to Jerusalem, though he was warned about what he would suffer there, was not daunted at all, instead he declared, “I am ready,” or willing, “not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts 21:13). His will was inflamed with love for Christ, and so all the persuasions that could

be used accomplished nothing at all. No one knows what to do with a self-willed person. We used to say, "He has his own will, there is nothing you can do to stop him." Indeed to have such a will for heaven, is a marvellous help to a man that undertakes the race there. A man that is determined, that has his will set upon something, says, "I will do my best to advance myself, I will not let my enemies hinder me, I will not give up while I can stand, I will succeed or lose my life trying." "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." (Job 13:15). "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." (Genesis 32:26). I will, I will, I will, O this blessed inflamed will for heaven! What can be compared to it? If a man is willing, he will go forward regardless of the opposition; but if he is unwilling, then the slightest opposition will discourage him. This is seen in both saints and sinners, that is, in them who are the children of God, and also in them who are the children of the devil.

Let me explain:

1. The saints of old, they being willing, and determined, what could stop them reaching heaven? Could fire, stake, sword, noose, stinking dungeons, whips, bears, bulls, lions, cruel torture, stoning, starvation, nakedness and such like? (see Hebrews 11). "Nay, in all these things [they] were more than conquerors through Him" that loved them, (Romans 8:37), who had made them "willing in the day of [His] power." (Psalm 110:3).

2. Consider the other side, the children of the devil, since they are not willing to run to heaven, how many excuses they will make. "I have married a wife, I have a farm, I shall offend my landlord, I shall offend my employer, I will lose trade, I shall lose my status, my pleasures, I shall be mocked and scorned, therefore I dare not come." "I," says another, "will wait until I am older, till my children have grown up, until I have made my way in the world, till I have done this and that", and other things besides; but the truth is, they are not willing. For if they were really willing, these and a thousand other matters, would hold them no firmly than the cords that held Samson when he broke them as burned flax. (Judges 15:14). I tell you that the will is very important, that it is one of the chief things which turns the wheel either backwards or forwards. Both God and the devil know this is true, and this is the reason why they endeavour to strengthen the will of their servants. God is endeavouring to make His people willing to serve Him, and as for the devil, he does all he can to possess the will and affection of his servants, with love to sin. Christ made this very clear when He said, "Ye will not come to me." (John 5:40). "How often would I have gathered you as a hen doth her chickens, and ye would not." (Luke 13:34). The devil had possessed their wills, and he knew they belonged to him. O therefore cry hard to God to inflame your will for heaven and Christ. Your will, I say, if it is truly set for heaven, you will not be beaten back by discouragements. This is the very reason that, when Jacob wrestled with the angel, though he lost a limb as it were, and the hollow of his thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him, yet, he said, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me." (Genesis 32:24-26). Notice the words "I will". Have your will sharpened with heavenly grace, and determination against all discouragements, and then go at full speed for heaven. But if you falter in your will, not only will you not reach heaven, you will run hobbling and limping all the way, simply to fall short at the last. May the Lord give you both the will and the courage!

I have finished with my advice on how you should run to the kingdom, so be sure to keep in memory all I have said to you, otherwise you will lose your way. But because I want you to remember them, I will write them out briefly:

1. Get into the way. 2. Study about the way. 3. Cast away everything that would hinder you. 4. Beware of bypaths. 5. Do not look all around you, but think about where you place your feet. 6. Do not stop for any that call after you, whether it be the world, the flesh, or the devil, for if possible all these will hinder your journey. 7. Do not be daunted by discouragements that you encounter along the way. 8. Take heed at stumbling at the cross. 9. Cry hard to God for an enlightened heart, a willing mind, and that He will give you a prosperous journey. Yet before I leave this matter with you, let me offer you a few motives to assist you along the way. It may be they will be as good as a pair of spurs to prick your hard heart in this rich voyage.

Nine motives to urge you on in the way.

First Motive. Bear in mind that there is no other way to heaven but this one, so you must either win or lose. If you win then you will have heaven, God, Christ, glory, eternal rest, peace, and everlasting life. Also, you will be made equal to the angels in heaven, you will sorrow no more, sigh no more, feel no more pain, you shall be beyond the reach of sin, hell, death, the devil, the grave, and whatever else seeks your hurt. But on the other hand, if you lose, then your loss is heaven, glory, God, Christ, eternal rest, peace, and all things that go to make eternity comfortable for the saints. Also, you will receive eternal death, sorrow, pain, blackness and darkness, fellowship with devils, together with the everlasting damnation of your soul.

Second Motive. Bear in mind that the devil, hell, death and damnation will come against you with as much force as possible, and that they have the right to do so because of the law, against which you have sinned. Therefore for the Lord's sake make haste.

Third Motive. If they catch up with you before you reach the city of Refuge, they will put an everlasting stop to your journey. So run as quickly as you can.

Fourth Motive. Know also, that at this moment heaven's gates, the heart of Christ, with His arms, are open wide to receive you. I believe that this thought, that the devil follows to destroy, and that Christ stands open-armed to receive, should cause you to stretch forward and fly with all haste and speed!

Fifth Motive. Keep your eye upon the prize. That is, be sure that your eyes are continually upon the reward that has been promised to you. The reason why men faint so often in their race for heaven is chiefly found in either of these two things:

1. They do not seriously consider the worth of the prize. or if they do, they are afraid it is too good for them. Most lose out on heaven because they do not consider the price and

the worth of it. Therefore, so as to keep yourself doing the same, keep your eyes upon the excellency, the sweetness, the beauty, the comfort, the peace, that is to be enjoyed by those who win the prize. This is the thing that caused the apostle to run through anything; good report, evil report, persecution, affliction, hunger, nakedness, peril by sea, and peril by land, chains and imprisonments. Also it made others to endure stoning, being sawn asunder, having their eyes bored out with hot pokers, their bodies roasted on gridirons, their tongues cut from their mouths, being boiled in cauldrons, thrown to wild beasts, burned at the stake, whipped at posts, and a thousand other terrible torments. For, “while they looked not at the things which are seen,” the things of this world, “but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:18). O that word “eternal,” this is what strengthened them. Though they were offered freedom (by their persecutors), they refused to accept it, for they knew that in the world to come they would have a better resurrection, (see Hebrews 11:35).

2. Do not let thoughts of the majesty of the place make you say in your heart, ‘This is too good for me’; for I tell you, heaven is prepared for whosoever will accept it, and they will be received with a hearty good welcome. If Lazarus the beggar entered there clean, so can you, as bad as you are. “Hearken, my beloved brethren,” says James, take notice of it, “hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?” (James 2:5). Therefore take heart and run.

Sixth Motive. Think about those that have gone before you. Firstly, the way they travelled to the kingdom. Secondly, how safe they are in the arms of Jesus, and do they desire to come back here again? If they were here, would they be afraid that God would not welcome them? Thirdly, what would they think of you if they knew that your heart began to fail in the journey, or your sins began to charm you and persuade you to stop your race? Would they not call you a thousand fools? and say, “O, that he could see what we see, feel what we feel, and experience beauty that we experience! If he could be here for just fifteen minutes, to see, to taste, and enjoy but a thousandth part of what we enjoy, what would he do then? What would he refuse to suffer? What would he leave undone? Would he love his sin? Would he love the things of the world? Would he be afraid of friends, or hide from even the most fearful threatening of the worst of tyrants could level against him?” No, those who have had but a glimpse of these things by faith, when they have been as far off from them as heaven is from earth, yet they have been able to say with a comfortable and merry heart, as a bird that sings in the spring, that this and more shall not stop them from running to heaven.

Sometimes when my base heart has been attracted by this world, and I have found myself loitering in my journey to heaven, the very thought of the glorious saints and angels in heaven, what they enjoy, and what low thoughts they have of this world, how they would consider we the greatest fool if they could know that my heart was drawing back. This has caused me to rush forward, to detest these poor, low, empty, beggarly things, and to say with all my soul, “Come, soul, let us not grow weary, let us see what this heaven is, let us give up everything for it not counting the cost.” Surely Abraham, David, Paul, and the rest of the saints of God, were as wise as any man today, and yet they gave up

everything for this glorious kingdom. Therefore throw away any stinking lusts, follow after righteousness, love the Lord Jesus, devote yourself unto His fear, and I promise you that He will bless you in a marvellous way. Reader, what do you say about this? Are you determined to follow me? No rather determine to get there before me. “So run, that ye may obtain.”

Seventh Motive. To encourage you a little further, start right away, and when you have wearied yourself with running, then the Lord Jesus will lift you up and carry you. Is this not enough to cause any poor soul begin his race? Perhaps you are saying, “But I am feeble and lame.” That may be so, but Christ still has a bosom. Remember, therefore, when you have wearied yourself with running, that He will put you in His bosom ... “He shall gather the lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.” (Isaiah 40:11). This is exactly what fathers do to encourage their children, saying, “Run, sweet babe, and when you are weary I will take you up and carry you.” When they are weary then shall they ride.

Eighth Motive. In addition to this, He will send new strength from heaven into your soul. “The youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:30-31). What more can I add to this? You will have the best of dwelling places, a good and wholesome diet, the bosom of Christ to lie in, and the joys of heaven to experience. Shall I speak of the abundance and the duration of all these? I do not have the ability to describe them to you in all their majesty.

Ninth Motive. I think that you should desire and run for heaven when you consider the schemes of the devil and his servants. Why, the devil, he will lose no time, spare no pain, nor will his servants also, both to seek the destruction of themselves and others. Should we not be as industrious for our own salvation? Shall the world be happy to damn their souls just to gain a corruptible crown, and we not suffer the loss of a few trivial things for an everlasting one? Shall they be happy to lose eternal friends, a God to love, redemption in Christ, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, heaven for a habitation, saints and angels for company, just to hold onto sin, the world, and a few vain, drunken, swearing, lying, covetous wretches like themselves? And shall we not labour as hard, run as fast, seek as diligently, no, a hundred times more diligently, for the company of these glorious eternal friends, though with the loss of such as these poor, low, vain, contemptible things, even ten thousand time more? Shall it be said to us at the last day, that wicked men made more haste to hell than you did for heaven? That they spend more time, day and night, for hell, than you spent for that which is ten thousand thousand of thousands times better? O let it not be so, but run with all your might and determination.

Thus you see I have raised, though only briefly, important issues. Now I want to apply what I have said and bring the whole matter to its conclusion.

Nine Applications of this Subject.

First Application. By now you understand, that he that wants to go to heaven must run for it, yet not only run, but run, as I have said, earnestly, consistently, stripping off that which would hinder his race. So then, do you so run? Let us examine this question a little further.

1. Are you truly on the right path? Are you in Christ's righteousness? Do you say yes in your heart, but in reality it is untrue? It is a very dangerous thing, you know, for a man to think that he is on the right path, when really he is on the wrong one. This other way will cause him to get lost, and though he thinks he is going to heaven, just as you claim for yourself, he will lose that also. This is the sad state of most men, for they convince themselves that they run right, when in fact they have never had so much as a foot in the true way! May the Lord give you understanding here, otherwise you will be damned forever. Can you honestly state a time when you turned from your sins and self-righteousness unto the righteousness of Jesus Christ? I am asking, can you see yourself in Him, and is He more precious to you than the whole world? Is your mind always fixed upon Him? Do you love to be talking about Him and walking with Him? Do you count His presence more precious than the whole world? Do you see all things as poor, lifeless, empty and vain without His company? Does His presence sweeten all things, and His absence embitter them? I plead with you, be serious, and lay it to heart, and do not claim to have salvation unless you have good reason to do so.

2. Have you filled your life with the things of this world, such as pride, pleasures, prosperity, lusts, and vanities? What! Do you think that you can run quickly with the world, sin and lusts in your heart? I tell you, soul, they that have laid all aside, every weight, and every sin, they have enough to do in their running. They know they must hold on despite all the opposition, jostles, shoves, stumbling-blocks, and the snares that the devil, sin, the world, and their own hearts, have place before them. Listen, if you want to go to heaven, you will find that it is not a small or easy matter. Have you unburdened yourself of all these things? Do not talk about going to heaven before you have done so, otherwise you will find yourself in the company of those who "will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." (Luke 13:24).

The Second Use. Let us go onto our next consideration. What will become of those who give up halfway through the race? The answer is simple. It is only he that holds out until the end that shall be saved; it is only he that overcomes who shall inherit the kingdom rather than the beginner. Agrippa took a good first step, for he almost stepped into the bosom of Christ. "Thou," said he to Paul, "almost persuadeth me to be a Christian." (Acts 26:28). Ah! but it was only an almost. He took a good step forward, but it was too short. He was excited at the beginning, but was soon out of breath. O that word almost! I tell you, that almost lost him his soul. How many times I have seen poor souls who almost reach heaven, how sad that almost is. That almost will torment them in hell when they cry out in agony, "I was almost a Christian; I almost got to heaven; I was almost free from the devil; I almost gave up my sin, and I was almost delivered from the curse of the law." Almost, but not quite. O that I should almost reach heaven, and not be able to enter

therein! Friend, it is a sad thing to sit down before we enter heaven, and to grow weary before we come to the place of rest. If this should be your case, I am certain that you are not running so as to obtain.

The Third Use. What then will become of them, who in the past ran swiftly to heaven and appeared to outrun everyone else, but are now running just as quickly to their old life? Do you think they will ever come this way again? What, to run back again, back again to sin, to the world, to the devil, back again to the lusts of the flesh? "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they had known it, to turn," to turn back again, "from the holy commandment." (2 Peter 2:21). These people shall not only be damned for sin, but for professing to the world that sin is better than Christ. For the one who runs back again, he is actually saying, "I have tried Christ, and I have tried sin, but I find more happiness in sin than in Christ." I say, that he declares this even while he is running back again. How sad! What doom they will experience, these who are almost at heaven's gates only to run back again. "If any man draw back," says Christ, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him." (Hebrews 10:38). Again, "No man having put his hand to the plough," that is, decided to follow God's ways, "and looking back," turning back again, "is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62). So if he is unfit for the kingdom of heaven, he will certainly be fit for the fire of hell. Those that "bring forth" these apostatising fruits, such as "briars and thorns, are rejected, and nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." (Hebrews 6:8). There is not another Christ to save them by bleeding and dying for them! If those who neglect Him cannot escape [damnation], then what will it be like for those who reject and turn their back upon "so great salvation"? (Hebrews 2:13). If the righteous, that is, those that run for it, find it hard enough to get to heaven, "then where will the ungodly" backsliding "sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:18). Imagine if Judas the traitor, or Francis Spira the backslider, could whisper in the ears of these men for a moment, they would tell them what it has cost their souls for backsliding. Surely these words would cause them to be afraid of running back again. They would live as though it were their final day on earth.

The Forth Use. Those who sit still, and have not so much as made a single step towards the kingdom of heaven, are no different from those just mentioned. Surely he that backslides, and he that sits still, are both of the same mind. One will not stir himself, because he loves his sins and the things of the world, the other runs back because he loves his sins and the things of this world also. Is there any difference between them? They are the same here on earth, and they will be in the same hell when they die! He is ungodly who has never sought Christ, but he is just as ungodly who did once follow Him only to run back again. Therefore the Lord will have to say to both of them, "Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41).

The Fifth Use. They who want heaven must run for it. This applies also to those who have heard the call and have just started to run. I advise them to watch their step if they intend to win, because you know that those who are behind need to run even faster. Friend, I tell you, there are those who have run ten years to your one, even twenty to your five, yet if you were to speak to them, they would say that they started to run too late in

life. How then will it be with you? Look to it, do not put it off for another moment, but speedily caste off all, everything that is an hindrance, and run. So run as to obtain.

The Sixth Use. You that have professed Christ for a long time, take heed or the beginners in Christ, who only cast off the world but yesterday, will outrun you. Then that scripture will be fulfilled on you, "The first shall be last, and the last first." (Matthew 19:30). This will result in your shame and their credit. What, for a young soldier to be more courageous than he that has fought in many wars! I say to those running behind, strive to outrun them that are in front of you; get ahead of them in faith and love if possible. For indeed this is the right way to run, this is, for one to strive to outrun another, even the last to endeavour to overtake the first. The one who is leading the race then has to hold his ground to the very end.

The Seventh Use. How foolishly do they behave themselves, who are unlikely to win, that think it is enough to keep company with the last. There are some who say that they are running to heaven as well as the next man, yet if there be any lazy, slothful, cold, half-hearted believer, they are sure to hold them up as an example. They think by keeping pace with them that they do well, but they forget that the last in the race does not win the prize. You already know what it cost the foolish virgins by coming too late, "They that were ready went in with him, and the door was shut. Afterward," notice this, "afterwards came the other," the foolish, "virgins saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; but He answered, and said," Depart, "I know you not." (Matthew 25:10-12). Depart, lazy believers, cold believers, slothful believers. The Word of God is so plain when it describes the damnation of lazy believers, that it is to be wondered why so few take any notice of it. What happened to Lot's wife when she ran lazily, and for simply looking back after she left Sodom? What happened to Esau when he came too late to receive the blessing? What happened to those who are described in Luke 13 "for staying till the door was shut"? Also the foolish virgins? How they will groan who waited too long. It turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26). It made Esau weep with an exceeding loud and bitter cry (Hebrews 12:17). It made Judas hang himself (Matthew 27:5). Yes, and it will cause you to curse the day you were born, if you miss out on the kingdom, as you will certainly do, if you continue the way you are going.

The Eighth Use. By your lazy running you will not only destroy yourself, but will also cause the damnation of someone else. For, by professing Christ, you must realise that others will take notice of you; and because you are but a poor, cold, lazy runner, one who takes the world and its pleasures along with him, others will think of doing the same thing. They will say, "We are doing as well as him. He is a believer, and yet he loves pleasures, riches, prosperity, vain company, and he is proud. He claims to be going to heaven, and he believes that he will be welcomed there. We may as well copy him, for we are doing no worse than he." O how fearful a thing will it be, if you are the cause of someone else's ruin through laziness in the way of righteousness! Wake up! Not only will you have to give an account of yourself before God, resulting in the loss of your own soul, but you will have to give an account for others, why you hindered them from entering in. What will you answer when He asks the reason why you would not enter in,

and why you caused others to fail also? This will happen to those who, through their own idleness keep themselves out of heaven, and by example hinder others also.

The Ninth Use. I have a final word for both of you.

1. I beg you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you will no longer run so lazily to heaven so as to hinder either yourselves or others. I know that even you, the laziest of runners, if you should see a man living only for this world and the things it offers, you would condemn him. Yet you are guilty of the very same thing yourself, in fact much worse, for you loiter in your race, neglecting your soul, heaven, glory, and all that is at stake. Wake up, wake up, poor wretched sinner, wake up.

2. If there are still those among you who, notwithstanding this advice, continue to be lazy and loiter in the way to the kingdom of glory, make sure that you do not take them as your example. Follow no man who does not follow Christ, but look unto Jesus, who is not only “the author and finisher of faith,” but who did, “for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God.” (Hebrews 12:2). I say, look to no man to learn of him if he does not follow Christ. “Be ye followers of me,” says Paul, “even as I also am of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Though he was an eminent man, yet his exhortation was, that none should follow him any further than he followed Christ.

Provocation

Now that you may be provoked to run with those in front, take notice of this. When Lot and his wife were running from cursed Sodom to the mountains, to save their lives, it is said that she looked back, and became a pillar of salt, and yet you see that neither her act, nor the judgement of God that fell upon her, could cause Lot to look behind him. I have sometimes wondered at Lot regarding this particular matter; his wife looked back and died immediately, yet no matter what happened to her, Lot refused to look back to see. We do not read that he as much as glanced over his shoulder to see if she was still behind him, or what had become of her. His heart was indeed upon his journey, and well it might; there was the mountain before him, and behind him was the fire and brimstone. His life was at stake, but he would lose it if he simply looked back. Run like this, and during your race remember Lot’s wife, remember her doom. and remember why the doom came upon her. Also think about why God made her an example for all lazy runners to the end of the world. Take heed that you do not follow the same example. If this does not provoke you, then consider this,

1. Your soul is your own, and it will be either saved or lost. You will not lose my soul through your laziness. It is your own soul, your own ease, your own peace, your own advantage or disadvantage. If it were my soul that you desire to be good to, I think you may find some reason to pity it. But no, it is your own soul. “What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). God’s people desire

to do good for the souls of others, but do you not wish good for your own? If this still does not provoke you, then let me add;

2. If you lose your soul, then you must bear the blame alone. Cain went stark mad when he considered that he did not look after his brother's soul (Genesis 4). How much more will it perplex you to think that you did not care about your own soul? If this does not provoke you to stir yourself, consider this;

3. That if you will not run, the people of God are determined to deal with you even as Lot dealt with his wife, that is, to leave you behind them. It may be that your father, mother, brother, or friend is going post-haste to heaven, are you willing to be left behind? Surely not! Also;

4. Will it not be to your shame to find that all the boys and girls of this country have more wisdom than you? It may be the servant of some men, such as the housekeeper, ploughman, or kitchen maid, that are looking more to heaven than their masters. I often think that more tenants than landlords, more servants than masters, will inherit the kingdom of heaven. But is this not a shame for them that are such? I am sure that you would hate it if your servants were wiser than you in the things of this world; yet, I am bold to say, that many of them are wiser than you in the things of the world to come, which is of greater concern.

A Short Expostulation.

Well, sinner, what do you say now? Where is your heart? Will you run? Are you determined to cast off all things? Or have you chosen not to do so? Think quickly, man, there is no time for dallying in this matter. Do not ask the advice of other men. Look up to heaven, and see what is prepared for you. Look at hell - of which you may understand something by reading my book entitled, *A few sighs from Hell, or the groans of a damned soul*; I want you to read it seriously - and so devote yourself to God. If you do not know the way, seek it out in the Word of God. If you need company, cry for God's Spirit. If you want encouragement, meditate upon the promises. But be sure you start right now; get in the way, run steadily and hold out until the end, and the Lord will give you a prosperous journey.

Farewell.

Notes:

1. Francis Spira. Around 1548 Francis Spira was a renowned lawyer in Italy. He converted to Christ, but afterwards he lapsed back into Popery. This caused him great

despair of soul. The man in the iron cage, at the Interpreter's house, as seen in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, is thought to depict him.

2. The Quakers believed in a doctrine called 'Inner Light' for their interpretation of Scripture. This led to the watering down of God's word.

3. The Ranter's took a dim view of the written word of God. They also believed in something close to sinless perfection.

4. Many Anabaptists (the term simply refers to the fact that they baptised those who professed Christ regardless if they were baptised as infants, thus meaning rebaptisers) were extremists, not unlike the cults of today, but there were those who were Biblically sound. It is in this sense that John Bunyan considers himself to be an Anabaptist.